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**24 Special Warfare Support: Arming the Weapon**

If SEALs are the spearhead of naval special warfare, support personnel are the backbone. A SEAL can receive the best combat training in the world, but without critical support elements such as logistics, intelligence, communications and weapon systems, his mission is not nearly as effective.

*Photo by MC2(AW) R. Jason Brunson*

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**Living on Virginia**

During the past year, USS Virginia (SSN 774) has been at sea more than 50 percent of the year. The Virginia-class, an upgrade from the Los Angeles-class submarine, enhances the Navy’s ability to execute the maritime strategy with technology, and the nimbleness to operate in shallow water. The dedication of the crew has been recognized twice with both the Battle Efficiency “E” and Navigation “N” by Submarine Squadron 4.

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**Preserving Florida’s Greatest Treasures**

Northeastern Florida is the third-largest naval region in the United States (trailing only Norfolk and San Diego). Sailors lucky enough to be stationed here often decide to stick around and retire to this military-friendly area, which is also home to some of the nation’s most beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife and outdoor recreational opportunities.

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**On the Front Cover**

These combat support Sailors represent just a few of rates found in Naval Special Warfare. These Sailors are called upon to use their knowledge in ways not usually found in the fleet. Being part of NSW allows them to gain experience unique to the special warfare community.

*Photo by MC2(CM) Jeremy L. Wood*

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**Next Month**

All Hands takes a look at how Electronic Attack Squadron 132, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., is preparing to receive the new EA-18G Growlers in August 2009.
BM Avonta U. Danzie (left) and SR Tanner B. Springer crew a rigid hull inflatable boat while performing preventive maintenance on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). Photo by MCSA Robert A. Robbins
The Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment are familiar to every Sailor who wears the uniform. But how do we use these values on a daily basis? What do they mean to you?

The Navy Ethos is a tangible expression of these core values and was created using the comments of thousands of active and Reserve Sailors and Navy civilians. The idea is that, regardless of experience, background or culture, the principles laid out in the Ethos are valued by everyone and support the Navy core values in the activities we do each day.

I am proud to say that I see daily examples, from the deck plate up on, of Sailors living by the principles of the Navy ethos.

“A diverse and agile force exemplifying the highest standards of service to our nation.”

In the submarine force, even the most junior Sailor receives advanced training on nuclear propulsion and is held to a high standard of excellence. But submariners are only one part of the nation’s sea power, we are all “ready guardians of peace, victorious in war.” Maintaining high standards in training ensures that we carry those standards through to our missions.

When I am on the waterfront, I see submariners studying, training, standing watch, and ensuring that the submarine force is ready to perform any mission at any moment. Though every task is not glamorous, it is this discipline and preparedness that gets us through the challenges we face.

Our Navy Ethos is what we want to have on our minds every day when we go to work. The way we work together and treat each other determines how successful we are within our community and as a Navy as a whole.

We have a dynamic and ever-changing Navy, and as we power ahead into the future at flank speed, we must remember those values we share and what makes us United States Navy Sailors.
The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) recently visited Naval Personnel Command where he spoke with one of the largest chief petty officer communities in the Navy about senior enlisted continuation boards.

“The response I’ve been receiving has been pretty positive. (I know) we’re going to have a few who don’t like this idea [but] that’s OK,” said MCPON (SW/SW) Rick West.

“I think the senior enlisted continuation board is a very important process for us. It gives us a quality check at the senior enlisted levels.”

According to NAVADMIN 030/09, performance-based, senior enlisted continuation boards call for an annual performance-driven review of chiefs, senior chiefs and master chiefs with more than 20 years of service and three years time in grade. Members not selected for promotion and advancement are reviewed by the continuation board. The board assesses an officer’s professional competence, and makes recommendations regarding promotion and advancement.

“Performance as Key to staying standing in the way,” added Hill. “We cannot promote them if we need to give them the opportunity. If we have a class out there ready to step up, we have quit. They have lost the Navy about senior enlisted petty officer communities in the world doing the work necessary to keep submarine communications responsive to a wide variety of challenges,” said Exley. “This honor truly reflects a tremendous team effort in this field of engineering.”

The requirement date for ESR submission is 30 days upon return to homeport.

The Chief of Naval Personnel recently released NAVADMIN 043/09 announcing the requirement for all active-duty and Reserve personnel to establish and maintain a self-service electronic service record (ESR) account.

“Having a self-service account is necessary for updating emergency contact information. Self-service accounts contain other important features, such as military and civilian identification cards, and a list of personal and family contacts.”

Candidate records must be post marked no later than Aug. 17, 2009. Further guidance on submitting a board package can be found in the NAVADMIN.

Candidates may confirm receipt of board packages by contacting the NPC customer service center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (1-866-827-5672).

Story by MCC/SW Marie Yager, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Newport, R.I.

Limited Paper-based Test Available

Paper-based Excelsior College and ACT exams may now be administered on ships designated as Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education (DANTES) testing sites under new policy guidelines announced in NAVADMIN 029/09.

“Thus is good for the Navy because it allows Sailors to maintain their educational progress while they serve aboard,” said Exley. “This is good for the Navy because it allows Sailors to maintain their educational progress while they serve aboard,” said Exley. "I was very honored and surprised by the announcement.”

Exley has also served as the Naval Sea Systems Command’s (NAVSEA) Technical Warrant Holder for Submarine Communications - Unique Systems and Nodes for On-Board systems for the past four years. As a technical authority, NAVSEA is assigned to the collaborative engineering elements of ship maintenance, modernization, construction, design and safety.

Dr. West has also established the best submarine communications team in the world doing the work necessary to keep submarine communications responsive to a wide variety of challenges,” said Exley. “This honor truly reflects a tremendous team effort in this field of engineering.”

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Scientist Wins ONR Award

Dr. Gerard Exley, head of the Naval Undersea Warfare Electromagnetic Systems Department at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division, Newport, R.I., was recently named the recipient of the 2008 Office of Naval Research (ONR) Dr. Arthur E. Bisson Prize for Naval Technology Achievement.

“Our Navy is vacancy driven, and if there is a hard-charging first class out there ready to step up, we need to give them the opportunity. We cannot promote them if we need to give them the opportunity.”

The requirement for Sailors serving at sea and without connectivity to establish an ESR is 60 days upon return to homeport.

The Navy first implemented ESRS in 2006. The ESR provides individuals Sailors, personnel support activity detachments (PSD), personnel offices holding service records, Navy commands (both senior and junior) and customer commands of PSDs, with secure worldwide Internet, access to personnel, training and awards data. The ESR replaces the paper service record as the single field of view entry point for service record maintenance. Commanders are required to use all available ESR functionality.

Self-service accounts can be created at https://nsips.mcn.navy.mil or on the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) ESR server on board ship.

Commanding officers, executive officers and selected master chiefs can obtain command-level view only access within their UCIs by completing the NSIPS/ESR system authorization request and contacting their local NSIPS area manager.

All commands responsible for service record entries are required to update on their ESR, but official military personnel file requirements remain unchanged.

NSIPS ESR is the data entry point for ESR maintenance. Sailors are responsible for the accuracy of their ESR and must contact their servicing personnel office if any information is incorrect.

For more information read NAVADMIN 043/09.

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

www.navy.mil
AWJ Photo by MC2 Kenneth R. Hendrix

AWJ Photo by MC2 Gabriel S. Weber

Lt. Joseph Nencka, the dental officer aboard USS Nashville (LPD 13), reviews dental X-rays while examining a patient while deployed for Africa Partnership Station 2009.

SN Christopher Smith, from Washington, D.C., assigned to Beachmaster Unit 5, Det. Western Pacific, directs Landing Craft Air Cushion 63, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 39, as it transports Marines and equipment ashore for Cobra Gold 2009, in Sattahip, Thailand. Cobra Gold is an annual Kingdom of Thailand and United States co-sponsored military exercise designed to train U.S. and partner Asian-Pacific forces.

HM3 Class Ricardo Perez, assigned to USS Boxer (LHD-4), says goodbye to his son before boarding the ship to leave San Diego. Boxer departed for a scheduled western Pacific deployment to provide global maritime security. Continued from page 8

To be considered for the “Around the Fleet” section, forward your high resolution (5” x 7” at 300 dpi) images with full credit and cutline information, including full name, rank and duty station to navvyvisualnews@navy.mil

Mail your submissions to: Navy Visual News Service 1200 Navy Pentagon, Room 4B114 Washington, D.C. 20370-5000

Click on the Navy’s home page, www.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.

 npc.navy.mil

To review NAVADMIN 029/09, visit www.npc.navy.mil

Story by Lt.j.g. Richlyn Neal, Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

To Web site

Navy Personnel Command (NPC) added a force stabilization fact sheet to its Web site to provide the fleet more information about how new personnel policies may affect them.

Those interested can review it at force stabilization measures visit www.npc.navy.mil

“Tif deckplate Sailors are out there working hard every day, that is what they need to focus on. Continue to work hard and perform at the highest level. Get your qualifications done and move forward, and you know what? You’re going to be okay,” said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/SW) Rick West during a recent visit with force stabilization policy makers at NPC.

The Web page, which had nearly 5,000 page views in the first two days, was added to the NPC Web site to provide references, answer frequently asked questions, and offer a fact sheet and links to more information to guide Sailors. “We had a lot of questions from Sailors about continuation boards, zone B PTS (perform to serve), and SRBs (selective re-enlistment bonus),” said Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Kenny Ellenburg, a brief for NPC’s Career Management Symposium team which visits commands throughout the fleet providing information on the latest Navy personnel policies.

Ellenburg and his team spoke to Japan-based Sailors at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Naval Air Facility Misawa, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Naval Air Facility Atsugi soon after several force stabilization Navy messages were released. “A lot of chiefs wanted to know what the senior enlisted continuation boards would be looking at,” said Ellenburg. More details are on the way and will be added to the force stabilization Web site as they become available as Navy officials finalize details.

“Similar to an advancement board, continuation board panel members will review both the candidate’s official record and submitted materials. As in advancements, the single most important factor influencing selection for continuation is sustained performance at the highest level. Get your qualifications done and move forward, and you know what? You’re going to be okay,” said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/SW) Rick West during a recent visit with force stabilization policy makers at NPC.

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superior performance of duty,” said Cmdr. Stuart Satterwhite assigned to Navy Personnel Command’s policy division.

Satterwhite is helping to draft the senior enlisted continuation board precept which will be reviewed by senior leaders before approval.

“A board precept is currently being drafted and will be vetted through those who normally provide input to board precepts, including MCPON. Details of the precept cannot be released, however, once the precept is complete, general information will be forthcoming,” said Satterwhite.

For further updates on force stabilizations measures visit www.npc.navy.mil.

Story by MCC (SW) Maria Yager, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Joint Service Exceptional Family Member Forum Provides Assistance

The Joint Services Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Committee of Hampton Roads recently held its 12th annual Joint Services Exceptional Family Member Forum and Resource Expo in Newport News, Va.

The goal of the expo was to bring together families, EFMP coordinators, medical staff personnel, and professionals working in the field of special needs to provide service members and their families information, resources and assistance.

“I think the EFMP is phenomenal,” said Fort Monroe Garrison Commander Army Col. Anthony D. Reyes. “Service members need to know that they have that kind of resource available to them. Because of that program, many of our service members are able to focus on their day-to-day jobs, and take comfort in knowing that their exceptional family members will be taken care of.”

The forum’s keynote speaker was Karen Gaffney of the Karen Gaffney Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to championing the journey to full inclusion in families, schools, communities and the workplace for people with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. Additionally, several workshops were held to cover more specific issues such as autism, estate planning and canine companions.

“The types of workshops that we put on are really to encourage parents to build strong relationships and a bond with their children,” said Eva Granville, EFMP coordinator, Fort Monroe, Va. “They should also build a bond with the caregivers and teachers, as well as the medical professionals. The parents are their child’s best advocate, they know what is best for their child.”

Service members with exceptional family members are encouraged to contact the Fleet and Family Support Center at their installation to learn more about the EFMP and enrollment procedures.

Story by MC3 Coleman Thompson, Navy Public Affairs Support Element-East.
A day after supervising the loading of eight war shot torpedoes for an underway training cycle, Machinist’s Mate 1st Class (SS) Steven Hurt walked the narrow passages of USS *Virginia* (SSN 774). As he conducted his daily duties, he took a moment to reflect on the path that brought him to become the Sailor of the year aboard the very same submarine he helped build and test as a civilian.
Six years ago, Hurt worked as a test service engineer for the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics. He was part of the team that tested all the systems of the future USS Virginia before commissioning, and he worked in the space that now houses Virginia’s torpedo tubes.

A husband and father, Hurt had previously served 11 years active duty as a submariner and then became a civilian in the Navy Reserve while he completed his second bachelor’s degree. Despite what many would consider a comfortable life, Hurt felt he was missing something vital. “I missed the camaraderie and friendship of the guys I worked with for years,” said Hurt. “I liked my job at Electric Boat, but it did not give me the same feeling of being on a submarine. Being a submariner is a way of life, and you must be immersed in it. You can’t do it part-time.”

Hurt first discussed with his wife the possibility of going back on active duty. With his wife’s blessing, he began a conversation with Virginia’s command leadership to seek a potential assignment. His brother-in-law, MMCS(SS) Christopher Frank, and MMCS(SS) Kenneth Caswell, a mentor from his prior active service, were instrumental in navigating the command leadership to support his coming back to active duty aboard Virginia.

Once Hurt secured the endorsement of the command, he then talked with a detailer to assure his assignment aboard Virginia pending completion of the reentry process for prior active service members.

Hurt serves as the leading petty officer for the weapons department, encompassing all the weapons launching systems. He is currently engaged in preparing his team for the Operational Reactor Safeguard Examination (ORSE) and the Tactical Readiness Evaluation (TRE) during their upcoming six-week underway. The ORSE and TRE evaluations will assess the submarine’s reactor along with its capacity to combat casualties and fight the ship.

“The ORSE and TRE evaluations are the big payoffs for the engineering and weapons departments,” said Hurt. “During the examination, we’ll be able to simulate weapons ensuring our capacity to fight the ship.”

Damage control is an essential aspect of life for a submariner. With roughly 130 total personnel on board, everyone is a fireman for any fire aboard, everyone is a fireman for years,” said Hurt. “I liked my job at Electric Boat, but it did not give me the same feeling of being on a submarine. Being a submariner is a way of life, and you must be immersed in it. You can’t do it part-time.”

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Along with deterrence, humanitarian assistance, power projection and forward presence, Virginia supports the maritime strategy aspects of maritime security and sea control.

“We contributed to maritime security through our support to counter illicit trafficking operations in the U.S. Southern Command area of focus,” said Schultz. “We maintain sea control by being able to track, range and [sight] multiple targets at one time. The forward presence comes from our littoral operations and being able to launch Mark 48 torpedoes and Tomahawks from a stealth position.”

And Hurt plays an important role in ensuring that, when tasked, that mission will be executed successfully. In his shop, this means constantly training his team simulating strikes using the Tomahawk Missile System (VLS).

The sonar technicians, fire controlmen and cooks all engage their jobs everyday. “When we engage our jobs, bad guys get hurt,” said Hurt.

**Technological Revolution**

Executive Officer Lt. Cdr. West Brigham, who has served the last three classes of submarines during his 13-year career, has witnessed Virginia’s enhancements firsthand.

“My first submarine was USS Houston (SSN 666), commissioned in 1971, which was the latest and greatest of its technology,” said Brigham. “My next submarine was a Los Angeles-class, which was a quantum leap in terms of sonar upgrades. Virginia-class [submarines] are a greater leap from Los Angeles-class, giving us the ability to obtain the entire picture before us by simply looking from left to right.”

The executive officer is able to see the total picture because of the more than 50 touch screens located throughout the submarine. These touch screens integrate sonar, radar and fire control giving the officer of the deck, and those with a need to know, instant knowledge on where the submarine is located and what’s out there – a clear upgrade from plotting navigation by hand. Virginia was the first sub to shift from paper to electronic navigation. Instead of approving paper charts, the commanding officer currently approves navigation charts on his laptop.

“The most significant enhancement for us was the progression from conventional to electronic navigation,” said Navigation Officer, Lt. Gregory Kooppe.

Waters has also witnessed the improvements of a Virginia-class sub as he also served on Los Angeles- and Sturgeon-class submarines.

“Both the Trident and 688-class submarines are capable and still meet the necessary mission,” said Waters. “However, the Virginia class is an incredible leap forward. This is the Starship Enterprise!”

The Virginia-class is also an enhancement in the field of photonics. Sailors in past classes of submarines used a long tube in the control room with mirrors to access the terrain beyond the submarine. Today, that information is gathered with high resolution cameras.

“At periscope depth our enhanced photonics give us the ability, day and night, to go anywhere and see everything within our reach,” said Waters.

Sonar Technician 3rd Class (SS) Jerry D. Mathurin, the lead sonar technician, said that the enhanced technology to ensure there are no potential objects or threats in the water.

“My job is to search the area for potential collision threats such as oil tankers,” said Mathurin. “We track potential threats by taking soundings in the water, convert it to digital and view it on a touch screen. On screen, we’re able to listen and look through everything in the water to ensure the ship will not be restricted.”

Completing the mission aboard a submarine is an all-hands evolution. Unlike larger commands where rank determines responsibility, tasks such as bringing food on board the submarine for an underway becomes everyone’s responsibility.

“We don’t have the luxury of always delegating tasks based on rank,” said Ensign Brian Higgins, Virginia’s supply officer. “Often times it can be a daily occurrence witnessing chiefs help junior Sailors load boxes aboard the submarine.”

**Their Brother’s Keeper**

Due to the small number of the crew, tighter relationships and bonds are forged regardless of rank and time in service.

“It is much more like a family serving on a submarine,” said Waters. “I know every crew member’s name, their job and can probably tell you what they like to do in their off time.”

Hurt comes from small towns helping his Sailors build the long-lasting relationships that are essential to mission accomplishment.

“The average age of a crew member is 20 years old,” said Hurt. “Although these guys are young, they apply themselves very quickly to become a self-sustained unit. They first come to the command with their heads like sponges. Watching them grow and develop is one of the greatest joys of my life.”

Yeoman 3rd Class Nathan Parrus is one of those “small-town” Sailors from Fort Smith, Ark.

The Hurt Smith was sort of sluggish, and I was looking for opportunity when I joined the Navy,” said Parrus. “Although it can be rocky when you first come in, you end up building relationships with folks from all walks of life.”

Mathurin, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., is an advocate of everyone being their brother’s keeper. Submariners do not receive regular mail and e-mail while deployed.

“There’s not a lot of space to work around on a submarine,” said Mathurin. “We don’t interact much with the outside world during operations, so all we have is each other. It’s a must for all of us to get along. Our motto is ‘I watch your back, and you watch mine.’”

Brigham believes the smaller crew and tighter bonds yield more effectiveness toward maintaining morale and good order and discipline.

“The professionalism and pride on board is stellar,” said Brigham.

For Waters, the most meaningful aspect of his job is the day-to-day interactions with the crew and witnessing their joy when they accomplish a huge undertaking.

“Watching the crew come together, do a job and do it well is incredibly satisfying,” said Waters. “I look on those Sailors’ faces when they accomplish an incredibly hard task always motivates me during the most challenging periods.”

“Hurt is living the time of his life aboard USS Virginia. The most rewarding job you can have is being a submariner,” said Hurt. “We’re a rare breed. There are more millionaires in the world than us, so that makes us elite.”

Hurt is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.
The sun-drenched state of Florida is one of America’s greatest natural treasures. Tourists flock to our southeastern-most state for its perfect mix of warm weather and unmatched beauty.

Northeastern Florida is the third-largest naval region in the United States (trailing only Norfolk and San Diego). The harbor, at nearby Naval Station (NAVSTA) Mayport, can provide a home for more than 30 ships. Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville is located just outside the city’s business district, and employs more than 23,000 civilian and active-duty personnel. Sailors lucky enough to be stationed here often decide to stick around and retire in this military-friendly area, which is also home to some of the nation’s most beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Preserving Florida’s Greatest Treasures

Story and photos by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack
The wildlife of Mayport

NAVSTA Mayport is home to some of Florida’s most pristine white-sand beaches. Each year, endangered sea turtles return to these beaches to nest, and the men and women of NAVSTA Mayport are their earnest guardians.

“Naval Station Mayport has at least 10 threatened or endangered species on base, 20 percent of the base is protected wetlands … and we have sea turtle nesting areas along 1.2 miles of beach,” said Arthur Burt, NAVSTA Mayport wildlife officer.

“We have to find every sea turtle nest site that’s on the station. We put screening all the way around each nest site, and we also put some mesh material on the top to keep predators out. We normally have a 100 percent hatch rate that makes it to the ocean from our sea turtle nest sites – with the exception being last year because Hurricane Fay took five of our 11 sites at the naval station,” Burt said.

Support for the turtles goes all the way to the top of the base’s chain-of-command. “The commanding officer of Naval Station Mayport and his wife Debbie are two of our state-certified volunteers,” said Burt. Educating the base population about sea turtles is a top priority. The turtles use light clues to find their way to nesting sites and, later, back to the ocean. Artificial lights can disorient the turtles and lead them in the wrong direction. Base residents are encouraged to close all house curtains that face toward the beach after sunset, and the base Navy Lodge and bachelor housing does the same.

“Our game wardens created a successful volunteer program for sea turtle protection so that on-base residents and tenants can learn about the threatened loggerhead turtles, which have experienced large increases in nesting and hatching rates during the last several years,” said Cheryl Mitchell, NAVSTA Mayport’s environmental director.

Maintaining the base’s beaches is another top priority for Mayport’s Environment Office staff. The team works with volunteers from housing, tenant commands and nongovernmental organizations to conduct shoreline cleanups. They also built six dune crosswalks to protect the areas from being trampled by beachgoers.

“We broadened our research into alternative funding programs, like the Agricultural Outlease program, to obtain funding for projects like the dune crosswalks that were completed last year,” said Mitchell. “This included the educational signs that will be posted on those walks this year. Mayport is fortunate to have so many natural areas – more than half the installation’s acreage is wetlands, river shoreline and beach front.”

“Our residents, Sailors and civilians work hard to protect and enhance these areas; and in an era of shrinking budgets, we all have become a lot more creative in how we implement our natural resources stewardship program,” Mitchell added.

“NAVSTA Mayport has performed in a true ‘team effort’ in executing our stewardship program. The evidence of our success is seen every day in the natural beauty of our installation,” said the proud wildlife officer.

The base is also populated by gopher turtles and river otters. But it is two more fearsome creatures that capture most of the base personnel’s attention.

Visitors to NAVSTA Mayport’s Lake Wonderwood often come to look for the two alligators who make their home there, and many long-time legends surround the “possible” existence of a Florida panther.

Many at Mayport believe the “Big Cat’s” presence is nothing but myth. According to Burt, the panther is very real and has been prowling the base grounds, going largely unnoticed, for years.

“He works the berm area,” Burt said. “He’s been there for more than two years. We’re putting up some signage about the panther because he’s beginning to cross the highway into a park which is city property.”

Mayport is also home to some very large birds.

“We have osprey nesting sites,” said Burt. “We put up some poles for the osprey to take over in the wetlands, and they have [began using them]. We have an eagle’s nest site, which is active each year between November and January.”

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NAS Jacksonville recycling drop-offs are used by thousands of base residents.

Jacksonville: Action on every front

NAS Jacksonville features a basewide recycling program that is a prime example of the regional commitment to safeguarding Florida’s natural wonders.

NAS Jacksonville began their recycling program in 1989 and 20 years later the program continues to expand and flourish.

“We normally receive recyclables from our main base command, tenant commands and everybody who lives in base housing,” said Storekeeper 1st Class Victor DeLeon, NAS Jacksonville recycling leading petty officer. “After they’re received, we process them and separate plastics, paper products, metals and glass. Next, we compact and bale thousands of base residents.

Sailors from NAS Jacksonville’s recycling center shovel cardboard into a mechanical compactor. In 2007, the center recycled more than 10,000 tons of material.
the products. Then we load up a big truck, and when it’s full, it’s delivered to a civilian contractor and we receive funds for the amount of product we provide.”

According to Capt. Jack Scorby, NAS Jacksonville’s commanding officer, “In fiscal year 2007 we recycled more than 10,000 tons of material, which includes glass, metal, paper, cardboard and plastic. That also saved us more than $250,000 in disposal costs alone. But the real reason we recycle is because it’s the right thing to do for the environment.”

Because they have so much to protect, the Jacksonville community and its citizens expect the Navy to take a leadership role in environmental efforts according to Scorby. “[Environmental stewardship] is very important to the Jacksonville community and it’s also part of the maritime strategy. It’s very much a priority for the warfighters here at NAS Jacksonville. We’re definitely committed to the environment. The city knows it, and we’re on Jackson’s River. We’re definitely committed to the Jacksonville community and its citizens environmental efforts according to Scorby. ’[Environmental stewardship] is very important to the Jacksonville community and it’s also part of the maritime strategy. It’s very much a priority for the warfighters here at NAS Jacksonville. We’re definitely committed to the environment. The city knows it, and we’re on a variety of their boards to ensure that we’re following proper procedures at all times.”

Another important piece of the installation’s environmental program is disaster response. Frequent drills maintain the team’s skills. “We had a mass casualty drill yesterday, and part of that drill involved a simulated spill of a fuel tank,” said Scorby. “We had our first-responders, and they were able to work on what they would do in the event that something like this did happen. It’s about getting out there quickly, and putting up barriers to prevent leakage to the river or any area where it could seep into the ground. One of the first calls we make for any kind of emergency is to the [NAS Jacksonville] Environmental Department. They’ll get teams out instantly to make sure we’re taking care of the environment.”

NAS Jacksonville also looks after the environment by ensuring strict guidelines are followed on hazardous material (HAZMAT) distribution and disposal. The Hazardous Material Center on base is the one-stop source for all HAZMAT needs for every command located on the base and is the disposal center for empty HAZMAT containers. “We have about 600 HAZMAT line items,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Randy Wade, NAS Jacksonville HAZMAT Center leading petty officer. “We make sure that the commands on base get the right HAZMAT – the stuff they are authorized to use – and we make sure that each item stays within regulations.”

Correctly managing HAZMAT is also a priority for each of the commands that call NAS Jacksonville home. “We have to ensure that our personnel know how to store each of these HAZMAT products safely,” said ADH Rick Pollock, Helicopter Squadron Light (HSL) HAZMAT coordinator. “We also ensure that each product is returned to our secure HAZMAT facilities and that we dispose of it properly. The first priority is the safety of our Sailors and the environment is a close second. If we train our people how to [properly] handle, return and dispose [of HAZMAT], the environment falls right in place.”

NAS Jacksonville sits alongside the beautiful St. John’s River and one of the top priorities for the base environmental office is protecting the river from fuel spillage and eliminating the very small amount of untreated wastewater that goes into the St. John’s.

“The design is to go to zero discharge of untreated wastewater [into the St. John’s River]. We want to reuse [the wastewater] for irrigation of our golf courses and ball fields,” said Chief Boatswain Mate (SW) Darrell Washington, NAS Jacksonville spill response officer.

The team at the NAS Jacksonville Boathouse is constantly drilling to minimize any damage from fuel spills into the St. John’s.

“Our job is to respond to any spill and assist the environmental office in any way possible,” Washington said.

Sailors assigned to the boathouse come from a number of different ratings, but the expectation is that each individual Sailor will have a comprehensive knowledge of spill-response techniques. There are five engineer, four boatswain’s mates and two electricians, but by the end of their six-week personal qualifications training, each Sailor is equipped to do each job at the boathouse.

“Boatswain’s mates are required to learn the engineer’s job – to work on engines and electrical stuff,” said Washington. “Electricians are required to know how to do an engine-man’s job. It’s all cross-training here, and it’s very important to the way we do business. No matter what your rating, when you come to the spill-response team you’ve got to be on top of your game.”

Washington said the dedication of his team is the reason the spill response team at NAS Jacksonville is so good. “For a small crew, I am unbelievably fortunate to have the team I have. It’s a superb group. Whatever I ask of them, they go out and get it done. It’s a dream job for a chief when you have the quality of Sailors that we have here. Day-in and day-out, nine or ten hours a day, these guys are just the best.”

In both Jacksonville and Mayport, protecting the region’s greatest natural resources comes naturally to the men and women lucky enough to be stationed in North Florida. “It’s very important that we have a strong environmental program,” said Scorby. “It’s good for the Navy, it’s good for the community and it’s just the right thing to do. I’m committed to ensuring that we remain good stewards within the Jacksonville community and having a strong environmental program is key to that success.”

McCallum is a photojournalist formerly assigned to Defense Media Activity Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

NAS Jacksonville’s HAZMAT center the team properly disposes of HAZMAT containers. Strict guidelines are followed to ensure the safety of Sailors and the environment.
It’s easy to think about a Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) combatant whenever you hear the words “special warfare.” These seasoned, fearless warriors are trained to slip under the radar into a specific locale to destroy the enemy and get out. SEALs are the maritime strategy at its most basic and primal level.

Special Warfare Support:
Arming the Weapon

GM1(SW) Travis Hillslip demonstrates how to reassemble an Mk-48 machine gun at the Logistic Support Unit’s armory.
A SEAL can receive the best combat training in the world, but without critical support elements such as logistics, intelligence, communications and weapon systems, his mission is not nearly as effective.

An Assignment like No Other

Roughly 60 percent of NSW personnel take on combat support (CS) and combat service support roles. In a typical deployed NSW squadron of roughly 300 personnel, of which 40 percent are operators, many of the combat support Sailors are assigned from logistics support units, support activities or group staff. They can vary from gunner’s mates and master-at-arms, to hospital corpsmen, intelligence specialists, information systems technicians and operation specialists.

Capt. Thomas L. Brown II, commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group 1, disagrees with the terms “tech” and “enabler” when describing support staff. “I think it does a disservice to their contributions,” said Brown. “The use of the words ‘tech’ and ‘enabler’ clouded our ability to plan the numbers of [certain] specialties we needed to be functional on the battlefield.”

Brown explained that SEALs focus on maintaining their highly specialized combatant skills, the expertise of the combat support and combat services Sailors is essential to the warfighters’ tool kit.

“If you start looking at all the tasks we load on a SEAL – weapons, diving, parachuting, language, regional expertise – we can’t also train him to run a network system, fix guns, order spare parts or repair motors [as efficiently],” Brown explained.

CM2(SCW) Juan Dobles (left) and other Navy Seabees from Logistics Support Unit 1, inspect the undercarriage of a new Humvee, prior to issuing it to the motor pool.

CM2(SCW) David Privett (left), tightens a suspension mount on a new Humvee, prior to issuing it to the motor pool. The Seabees work in concert with government contractors at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif., allowing them to learn skills not normally available in the fleet.

A Responsibility of the Utmost Importance

The absence of a SEAL trident on the support personnel in no way detracts from the importance of their roles. Since the SEALs are immersed in keeping their highly specialized training up-to-date, it’s up to the support staff to make sure the Humvees are running, the weapons are in good working order and ready to put rounds down range, the lines of communication are open, and the intelligence is updated and relevant.

Construction Mechanic 2nd Class (EXW) Joey Johnson, from Logistics Support Unit (LOGSU) 1’s Combat Service Support Detachment (CSSD), maintains the Humvees for the SEALs in support of their training missions. The magnitude of this responsibility remains at the front of his mind constantly.

“If those trucks aren’t running, those boys aren’t going out,” said Johnson. “If that truck breaks, it’s my fault and they want to know why. You are held accountable – they don’t play around.”

Seabees are also responsible for the establishment of camps and command posts, while on deployment.

“We support the SEAL teams in logistics – embarkation, expeditionary camp set-ups,” said Construction Electrician 1st Class (EXW/SCW) Chance Agnew, leading petty officer for LOGSU 1 CSSD. “When a SEAL team gets ready to deploy, we actually go [on temporarily assigned duty] three months prior to the unit deploying. Once we get into theater, we break it up and put Seabees into every location the squadron is going to be maintaining.”

Some Sailors have found working for NSW to be different but rewarding.

“It’s a whole different perspective. For me, the personal growth being a member of NSW … you can’t beat that. It’s a lifetime experience that you’ll remember,” said Storekeeper 2nd Class (SW/AW) Gener Paraon, assigned to LOGSU 1’s supply department.

For Chief Gunner’s Mate’s (EXW/SW) Nick Peters, getting the right weapon to the right person at the right time is of the utmost importance.

“We support their training in the logistics sense,” said Peters, the leading chief petty officer for the LOGSU 1 armory.

Along with the routine ammunition issuances and weapons inventories, Peters emphasized the need for agility and proficiency, due to the high tempo of SEAL training.

“If a weapon goes down during a block of training, the SEAL operator, who is tactically proficient, is probably not going to be capable of performing [nor will have the time to complete] the technical repairs. They can’t stop the clock and secure from training; [a weapons technician] needs to be on site to provide immediate technical support [to] either get the weapon back on line or get a replacement.”

The typical deployment schedule for NSW support staff consists of six months, with the following 10 to 12 months back ashore. But, this can vary from Sailor to Sailor.

“When we get back, we have 10 months at home,” Agnew explained. “But, some guys like to turn around and do a back-to-back deployment right away.”

The time between deployments provides no leisure period – NSW personnel are sent to different schools to hone their existing skills and to acquire new skills vital to the mission.

“There’s a saying within the teams that amateurs do it until they get it right, but professionals do it until they never get it wrong,” said Peters. “That’s one of the mottos they live by, [to] train so they can execute [their mission] perfectly.”

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“There’s a saying within the teams that amateurs do it until they get it right, but professionals do it until they never get it wrong,” said Peters. “That’s one of the mottos they live by, [to] train so they can execute [their mission] perfectly.”
A Sailor in a combat service support role almost has to have a “MacGyver” complex, being able to make a piece of equipment work with little-to-nothing on hand while thinking on one’s feet.

“The operators can show you how to make a Humvee run on nothing,” said Johnson. “How to battle start it, how to start it using just plain wires. It’s training you will never get to see in a battalion or anywhere in the Naval Construction Force.”

The greatest level of autonomy afforded to Sailors, in Agnew’s eyes, is one of the biggest challenges of working for NSW.

“You’re held responsible at a higher level, and it gives you a challenge of, ‘I got to get this done, I got to get this done!’” said Agnew. “You don’t get the instantaneous gratification from your work, but what you’re doing [at NSW], you get the gratification of guys going out, finishing a target or doing a tribal engagement. It’s based off a lot of stuff you’ve done analytically.”

In an environment where self-reliance and initiative are fostered, Sailors are offered and encouraged to attend schools and master their craft to the umpteenth degree.

“Being with NSW, I’ve actually been able to attend two years of Arabic language studies, through both military and privately taught courses,” he said. “That’s benefited me a great deal – I’m proficient in reading and writing, semi-proficient in speaking and understanding Arabic, which I used on my last deployment to Kuwait.”

The increased responsibilities of the assignments at NSW coexist with a number of opportunities that are hard to find anywhere else. Working for NSW can give a Sailor a crash course in ratings other than his or her own, or a firsthand look at how his or her work directly impacts the SEALs’ mission.

“My previous experience in the fleet was just a bunch of number-crunching, coming in everyday for a 12-hour watch,” said Chief Intelligence Specialist John Collins, from Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 1.

“You didn’t really see the effects of the analysis you’re doing. You didn’t get the instantaneous gratification from your work, but what you’re doing [at NSW], you get the gratification of guys going out, finishing a target or doing a tribal engagement. It’s based off a lot of stuff that you’ve done analytically.”

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The opportunity to earn the coveted Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare Specialist (EXW) pin has become another incentive for hard-charging Sailors at NSW. Like any other pin, much on the job training is involved.

“It’s not too different from other warfare qualifications in that the bulk of the work lies primarily within completing the prerequisite material,” said Peters. “Once all that’s completed, completion of the Expeditionary Warfare book entails a lot of the items you would find in the Seabee handbooks.

The EXW pin is mandatory for all active-duty enlisted, support personnel, ranks E-5 and above, who meet eligibility requirements and work in a command that allows the pin. E-4 and below and enlisted selected Reservists can qualify for the pin, but reservists must be assigned to an NSW Reserve unit for a minimum of a year prior to final qualification. SEALSs and SWCC are allowed to pursue the pin.

To me, it was a lot more enjoyable than previous warfare qualifications, because it was a lot more fun to learn how to set up a [field shelter system] or field-strip an M-16, because it’s something that’s practical to us.

Besides becoming a career-enhancing tool, the EXW qualification demonstrates a Sailor is a true expeditionary asset, a skilled warfighter that can be trusted even in the most extreme situations. This trust is essential to the relationship between SEALSs and support staff.

“You’re part of a team,” said Master Chief
Utilitiesman (SCW) Paul Foley, “but when it comes down to it, these guys are the best at what they do. They expect you to be on point. We all know each other, and we rely on the guys we deploy with, and these guys rely on their storekeepers [and] their gunner’s mates to make sure they have the weapons, the ammo, and the equipment they need to get the job done. I wouldn’t say it’s a laid-back mentality, [but] more of a team atmosphere.”

A key plus to being at NSW is that those who do well are almost never left unrecognized. “They take care of their people here,” said Johnson. “They give credit where credit is due. If you do a good job, you’re going to be recognized. They’ll pull you in front of the group [and] give you the recognition you deserve.”

Foley senses the same feeling of reward among those battle-tested in the NSW environment. “I interview all of our people when they come in and when they leave,” he said, “and I have never had an outbound [person] transfer from the command tell me that he did not like being here. That’s the kind of people I want.”

Wanted: A Few Good Men (And Women)

“We seek the best people out there for the mission at hand,” said Foley. “That requires individuals who are independent thinkers. They are often out there on their own doing what we expect them to do. The only time we really hear from them is when the job’s done.”

Lt. David Huber, a supply officer within NSW, had nothing but praise for the Seabees with whom he worked. “You might have two or three Seabees at a location out in the middle of the desert,” said Huber. “[They] need to be able to leverage support from other units on site, and they did a fantastic job. NSW wouldn’t have been able to function as a squadron without quality Seabee support.”

Sailors wishing to throw their cover in the ring with NSW have to know their ratings well. Sailors interested in an NSW billet should possess a valid security clearance, have no non-judicial punishment or courts-martial on their record, and be able to qualify as a second class swimmer.

“Some people come here thinking it’s going to be a cakewalk, and they don’t do so [well],” said Agnew. “For people who try – it’s rewarding. You get a lot out of it. The people here will definitely reward you for what you do.”

Vlahos’s words leave little else to be said. “If you come here, be prepared for the challenge. This isn’t an easy command. You gotta be ready.”

The message is clear – NSW duty can be very rewarding personally and professionally, but it’s up to the Sailor to invest the great deal of effort required to succeed in such a challenging and demanding community. Johnson’s words leave little else to be said. “If you come here, be prepared for the challenge. This isn’t an easy command. You gotta be ready.”

Vlahos and Brunson are assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

Editor’s Note: For more information about Special Warfare Support assignments contact your command career counselor.

A turret gunner launches a Swift Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from the top of a Humvee with a specially-designed slinghot. SEAL Teams use UAVs to help scout out rugged terrain and urban areas in real-time.
NM CB 7 Redeploys to, Focuses on Afghanistan Operations

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NM CB) 7 recently redeployed from Iraq to Afghanistan.

The move repositioned the battalion to build bases for additional U.S. forces already flowing into southern Afghanistan to reinforce the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). "Our engineering services are needed here in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, to construct a number of new forward-operating bases (FOB) in support of the much-publicized 20,000-plus troop surge into southern Afghanistan," said Lt. Cmdr. James Brown, NM CB 7’s operations officer. "We had a very important mission in Iraq supporting the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, but there was a larger demand here in Afghanistan. Our capabilities, to not only build, but to build in hostile areas, and defend ourselves and the new areas we create, made Seabees the logical and necessary choice." The movement included the embarkation of troops and equipment necessary to ensure mission success.

"The effort needed to airdrop an entire Seabee Battalion’s armored construction equipment in less than 40 days would be a tremendous accomplishment for any unit," said Brown.

"Recognizing the extreme importance of the mission and aggressive surge timeline, NM CB 7 successfully rose to an even higher challenge. For the first 30 days we were greatly impressed as they were eager to help with an amazing attitude to back it.”

While NM CB 7’s main effort focused on quickly building the necessary force protection emplacements for the FOB, the battalion will occupy, some Seabees focused on providing service to the U.K.-run base and other deployed units. "The Seabees of NM CB 7 have really captured our attention. We describe them as the ‘enablers’ to the enablers. They are self-contained units who are eager to help with an amazing attitude to back it.”

This Just In...

NM CB 7 Redeploys to, Focuses on Afghanistan Operations

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NM CB) 7 depart an Air Force C-17 aircraft following its arrival at a forward-operating base in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. NM CB 7 is deployed to Afghanistan to provide contingency construction support to Alliance forces supporting NATO International Security Assistance Forces. The U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, the men and women of Commander Task Force (CTF) 56 play a vital role in the region by providing operational oversight for all naval expeditionary combat forces. CTF-56 supports nine different task groups including expeditionary combat, logistical support and combat service support forces. "The mission of CTF-56 is to properly assign and manage Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) forces in theater," said Capt. Michael Jordan, commander, CTF-56. CTF-56 has several different task groups that fall under their command. These task groups include: Naval construction force, Navy explosive ordnance disposal, mobile diving and salvage, maritime expeditionary security forces, Navy expeditionary logistics support forces, combat camera, riverine security, expeditionary intelligence units, maritime civil affairs teams and expeditionary training teams. "We are unique from other task forces in 5th Fleet because we have a much wider range of capabilities," said Lt. Cmdr. Eric Bray, CTF-56 operations officer. "Our task groups cover multiple roles throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet, from security, construction to ordnance disposal." CTF-56 task groups deploy throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations to support various commands. "Our task forces are deployed to seven countries throughout the region," said Bray. "Our task groups are serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom as well as conducting maritime security operations.” Members of the EOD task group regularly deploy to front line commands.

"We get called to clear IEDs a lot in Iraq,” said Explosive Ordnance Disposal 1st Class (EWS) Phillip Morrison, who deployed there in 2006 and 2007. "If EOD wasn’t there to remove IEDs, they might still be there killing or wounding our Soldiers.” EOD Sailors also help gather information on the IEDs being used in Iraq, which enable investigators to hunt the terror cells that plant them.

"CTF-56 also provides intelligence information that helps NAVCENT operate effectively.”

"Being part of CTF-56 has given me a bigger view of how and why we operate the way we do,” said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Douglas Kelley Jr. “Doing this job allows those in command to make informed decisions on how to best use our troops and resources.”

"I’m glad to be supporting the troops on the front lines,” said Morrison. "I always want to be as involved as possible in supporting the troops who are in harm’s way.” That’s the greatest honor that a Sailor can have.”

"Our most recent redeployment evolution proved that our deployment success was not just luck or chance,” said Brown. "In fact, it showed us that we were well-prepared by the 20th Seabee Readiness Group embark staff. NM CB 7, by doctrine, can deploy an air detachment of 89 personnel within 48 hours of notification. When the battalion deploys an air detachment...the entire battalion contributes to the effort. In this case, we had less than a full battalion, worked in a semi-austere contingency environment, and moved a great deal more equipment. We also had to compete for air lift with other services that were also in the process of redeployment. We trained very hard in embarkation last homeport and it was a magnificent success!”

Story by MC2 Michael B. Laverdense, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7.

CTF-56 Serves Multiple Roles in 5th Fleet

In the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, the men and women of Commander Task Force (CTF) 56 play a vital role in the region by providing operational oversight for all naval expeditionary combat forces. CTF-56 serves multiple roles in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to support various commands. Our task forces are deployed to seven countries throughout the region,” said Bray. “Our task groups are serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom as well as conducting maritime security operations.” Members of the EOD task group regularly deploy to front line commands. “We get called to clear IEDs a lot in Iraq,” said Explosive Ordnance Disposal 1st Class (EWS) Phillip Morrison, who deployed there in 2006 and 2007. “If EOD wasn’t there to remove IEDs, they might still be there killing or wounding our Soldiers.” EOD Sailors also help gather information on the IEDs being used in Iraq, which enable investigators to hunt the terror cells that plant them. CTF-56 also provides intelligence information that helps NAVCENT operate effectively. “Being part of CTF-56 has given me a bigger view of how and why we operate the way we do,” said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Douglas Kelley Jr. “Doing this job allows those in command to make informed decisions on how to best use our troops and resources.” “I’m glad to be supporting the troops on the front lines,” said Morrison. “I always want to be as involved as possible in supporting the troops who are in harm’s way.” That’s the greatest honor that a Sailor can have.”

Story by MC2 Michael B. Laverdense, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7.

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NM CB) 7

US Navy (DDG 82) conducted community relation (COMREL) projects in Dili, Timor-Leste during a recent port visit. The crew of Lassen hit the ground running with a COMREL within hours of dropping anchor off the coast of the island country. The first COMREL was at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage, where Sailors delivered toys and sweets to the children.

“Everybody was running around and having a good time,” said Storekeeper 2nd Class (SW) Nakita Golden, from Savannah, Ga. “Being out there having fun and supporting [the citizens] made it a great experience.” “The interactions also helped overcome the language barrier,” she added.

The crew of Lassen was also invited to celebrate Australia Day, the Australian equivalent to American Independence Day. The highlight was a tug-of-war competition among members and contractors of the Australian Army, Lassen Sailors and members of various regional forces of the International Stabilization Force and United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste. Australian service members interacted with their counterparts from the defense forces of both Australia and Timor-Leste throughout the port visit, conducting training on damage control and visit, board, search and seizure techniques.

“It was an honor to be invited to attend Australia Day,” said Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 2nd Class (NAC) Hadley Lassen.

Commodore (COMREL) projects in Dili, Timor-Leste during a recent port visit. The crew of Lassen hit the ground running with a COMREL within hours of dropping anchor off the coast of the island country. The first COMREL was at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage, where Sailors delivered toys and sweets to the children.

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throughout the city, and I take pride in not every day that you host a head of state. Timor-Leste, for a reception on board. José Manuel Ramos-Horta, the president of 34 ALL HANDS charity. The supplies will be used to help the care supplies, and sports equipment to a local Handclasp pallets of medical supplies, infant education is critical to realizing your dreams. “The RCB is equipped with a remote operated small arms mount (ROSAM) on which a variety of machine guns can be mounted. The ROSAM allows for a safer mission by keeping Sailors inside the boat while operating the weapon. It also has an automatic target locking capability, which allows easier and more accurate operations during high seas and high speed operations. Several universal mounts topside also allow Riverine squadrons to mount any type of manned machine gun or grenade launcher needed for the mission. “The Navy saw other countries use their version of the RCB, and saw that the boat can do anything you need; it can be refueled at sea, and it’s very, very flexible for use on long range missions,” said Enginnerman 1st Class (ENSW) Christian Jimenez, RCB coxswain. The cockpit is constructed with armor plating around the boat, protecting the crew members and engine compartment during passage through harsh areas. The armor protects against small arms fire and fragments from nearby explosions. The boat also protects against nuclear, chemical and biological agents because the cabin and cockpit can be pressurized when entering a contaminated area. There is a facility inside the compartment in case of decontamination being needed. “On a general scale coming straight from the manufacturer,” said Jimenez, “we can make this boat into anything we want, which is another great thing about the RCB.” Navy ITs Adapt to a Changing World, Support Maritime Strategy When the Navy shot down a non-functioning satellite last year, an information systems technician (IT) didn’t “push the button.” The traditional wire and radio trick, critical data and the managed communications links required to execute the mission. “The running mates program, one of APS Nashville’s main components, provides maritime safety and security for the continent of Africa. The running mates program builds upon that idea from the deckplate level allowing the relationships built to act as the catalyst for a safer maritime environment. APS Running Mates Program Nurture Long-term Relationships West African trainees and U.S. Sailors participating in Africa Partnership Station (APS) Nashville are building partnerships on both professional and personal levels with APS Nashville’s program aboard USS Nashville (LPD 13). The running mates program, one of APS Nashville’s main components, provides maritime safety and security for the continent of Africa. The running mates program builds upon that idea from the deckplate level allowing the relationships built to act as the catalyst for a safer maritime environment.

Story and photo by MCSN Charles D. Olson, U.S. Navy photo (PH 13).
Avoid Excess Costs When Shipping Household Goods

Story by Nannette Davis, graphic by MC2(SW) William Blake

The process to close out a permanent change of station (PCS) household goods (HHG) move can be longer than expected and often Sailors are at risk of receiving a bill many months after the actual move.

There are several aspects of PCS moves that all Navy personnel need to be aware of to help themselves and to help the Navy. Rear Adm. Andy Brown, commander, Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (COMFISC), is making PCS move support a top command priority.

“Too many Sailors are getting billed for exceeding authorized weight allowances or making bad decisions; this hurts our Sailors and costs the Navy more to move them,” said Brown.

On average, the Navy processes 178,000 PCS orders a year at a total cost of approximately $800 million. Of this, almost $500 million is spent moving household goods, including privately owned vehicles (POVs).

“Every pound we move costs the Navy and adds to the potential for Sailors to pay excess weight charges,” said Brown. “And, it could take up to two years from the date of your last move for the bill to reach you.”

Navy members can perform different types of HHG shipments under most PCS orders such as personally procured “do-it-yourself” moves and government-arranged household goods, unaccompanied baggage and non-temporary (long-term) storage shipments. For each type, the weight is counted against the maximum weight allowance.

Weight allowances are based on a member’s rank and number of family members.

“You will pay excess costs if the combined weight of all shipments made under a specific PCS order exceeds the maximum entitlement for your rank and dependent status,” said Brown.

“Many factors can contribute to excess costs, such as attempted pickup or delivery charges, exceeding maximum weight allowances or storage periods, shipping excess distances or unauthorized items, or even accessorial services such as packing and crating,” said Brown.

“Always consult your local personal property office (PPO) before arranging any type of government-funded household goods move.”

When planning your move, it is important to avoid or minimize excess costs wherever possible.

“Consider donating or discarding unneeded HHG items such as appliances, furniture, housewares, collectibles and building or remodeling supplies. It helps you and it helps the Navy,” Brown said.

Brown also recommends discussing storage requirements with a personal property counselor before the move.

“A Navy family might not own a home at the new duty station or have a rental property picked out, so they may need to move into a temporary residence,” Brown said. “If all of their household goods can’t fit into the temporary residence, the government is not obligated to pay for temporary storage in transit (SIT) beyond 90 days.”

To avoid incurring debts for government-directed moves, here are some tips on staying within your authorized weight allowance.

• Dispose of unwanted articles. Shipping unneeded articles is needlessly expensive; shipping costs vary based on destination, region or country.
• Claim professional books, papers and equipment (PBP&E), also referred to as pro gear. Declare all PBP&E weight, even if your estimate is within your weight allowance. Check to ensure the weight is reflected on your DD Form 1299 prior to pickup. Separate the PBP&E before the transportation service provider (carrier) arrives, as they must mark and weigh the pro gear.
• Check your inventory form periodically to ensure the carrier annotates PBP&E accurately.
• Request a reweigh if your pre-move survey estimate is more than your maximum allowance. If your shipment is picked up and exceeds your weight allowance, ask the destination PPO to reweigh the shipment. Reweighing the shipment will not cause any increase in excess cost to you.
• Avoid shipping excess unaccompanied household goods (UB). Because UB shipments usually travel by air, they tend to be very costly and may result in higher excess costs per pound. Avoid shipping unnecessary items in your UB.
• Minimize temporary storage in transit (SIT). SIT raises the overall cost of personal property shipments and may increase the total excess cost. If your shipment is overweight, have it delivered within the authorized time frame, generally within 90 days of arrival at destination.
• Overseas weight restricted areas: If you are moving to, from or between an administratively weight restricted area, ensure any additional weight allowances are approved before shipping. Contact your local PPO for more information.
• Excessive packing: If you feel the carrier used excessive packing material for your move, notify the destination PPO prior to delivery. They can instruct the carrier to completely unpack the shipment and verify the weight of the packing materials.

Pay attention to weight estimates. Remember, weight estimates made by carriers or personal property counselors are not binding; they are for planning purposes only. Excess costs are based on the actual weight of unpacked and uncrated household goods, and cannot be accurately determined until the shipment is packed, picked up and weighed at a certified scale.

So, what should you do if you receive a notification of indebtedness for a household goods move?

Brown, who has paid excess costs himself, is on a mission to advise Sailors.

“Review your shipping documents for each move and pay special attention to the household goods inventory sheets,” advises Brown. “Carefully check your DD Form 1299 [Application for Shipment and/or Storage of Personal Property] to ensure PBP&E or pro gear was annotated. Submit all supporting documentation to the household goods audit team (HHG-AT) within 30 days of the indebtedness notification.”

If you no longer have copies of your shipping documents, contact your local PPO or the HHG-AT toll-free at 1-888-742-4467, or via e-mail to pptas.fscn@navy.mil. Overseas callers may call DSN 312-646-5412 or commercial (757) 443-5412. You can also log on to their Web site at https://pptas.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/pptas/.

Be aware of your PBP&E accurately. Your local PPO can instruct the carrier to completely unpack the shipment and verify the weight of the packing materials.


Brown is assigned to Commander, Fleet & Industrial Supply Centers, San Diego; Blake is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.
Special Warfare Boat Operator 2nd Class John Cowgar of Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG) 4 competed against more than 100 other SEAL and special warfare combatant-craft crewmen (SWCC) combat medics within Naval Special Warfare Command to be selected as the Naval Special Warfare Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) of the year by the Special Operations Medical Association.

“He’s an excellent example of a SOCM in Naval Special Warfare,” said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Rickie Fry, NSWG 4’s medical department leading chief petty officer. “He has excellent medical and leadership skills that he has proven in combat.”

The most challenging step to becoming a SOCM is six months of intensive training at the Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center, Fort Bragg, N.C. The training taught him to perform a variety of life-saving skills in an austere environment with a focus on trauma skills. A SOCM may be called upon to administer advanced cardiac life support, intubation, chest tube thoracostomy or venous cut downs.

Cowgar was injured during the attack, but aggressively engaged the enemy until the troop was out of the contact area. He ignored his own injuries and tended to a teammate with severe shrapnel wounds. His selfless efforts earned him the Bronze Star with a V for Valor, March 10, 2008.

“My training has benefitted me every day,” said Cowgar. “Since becoming a SOCM, I have been given the chance to help others on a regular basis.”

Since reporting to the NSWG 4’s medical department in April 2008 Cowgar has taken the SOCM program within the special boat team community under his wing. He created a tracking program to stay current on the number of SOCMs at each team and at the schoolhouse.

Since the implementation of his sustainment program SOCM numbers within the special boat team community have increased.

“I created the sustainment program to further enhance and sharpen the skills of a SOCM, enabling them to better treat their teammates,” said Cowgar. “So far it’s working very well. It has provided an avenue for learning which has increased our medical readiness across the board.”

Gerstenslager and Whittenberger are assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 4, Virginia Beach, Va.
History

USS Nautilus: Under Ice on Nuclear Power

Story by MC2 Ron Kuzlik

USS Nautilus (SSN 571) commanding officer Cdr. Eugene P. Wilkinsen sent the message “Underway on Nuclear Power,” to the submarine force commander, as the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine cast off her lines and departed the pier at Groton, Conn., on the morning of Jan. 17, 1955. She was the fourth ship to bear the name Nautilus.

The submarine left England for New York City, sailing more than 3,100 miles submerged in six days, 11 hours, and 55 minutes. Upon her arrival, the crew was greeted with a hero’s welcome, followed by a traditional New York-style ticker-tape parade. During the next three decades, Nautilus continued to perform her mission with pride and distinction, passing many milestones and many fists. Nautilus and her crews earned a variety of awards and commendations for their gallant service.

In the spring of 1979, Nautilus sailed from Groton, Conn., on her final voyage. Following a career that spanned nearly a quarter century of service - after 2,507 dives and more than 513,550 miles steamed – she was decommissioned March 3, 1986, at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, Calif.

Nautilus was overseen by none other than then-Capt. Hyman G. Rickover, the “Father of the Nuclear Navy.”

Her keel was laid by the 33rd President of the United States Harry S. Truman, June 14, 1952, and launched Jan. 21, 1954, as First Lady Mamie Eisenhower broke the traditional bottle of champagne across her bow as Nautilus slid down the ways into the Thames River in Groton.

By Feb. 4, 1957, Nautilus logged 60,000 nautical miles, matching the endurance record of the fictionalized submarine Nautilus, from H.G. Wells’ 1870 novel Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea.

Under the command of Cdr. William R. Anderson, Nautilus and her 116-man crew departed Pearl Harbor, July 23, 1958, under top secret orders, Operation Sunshine. Then, on Aug. 3, he announced to his crew, “For the world, Our Country and the Navy – the Arctic ice cap.”

The crew of USS Nautilus (SSN 571) stands quarters for entering the port of New York. Nautilus arrived after making a trans-polar voyage under the Arctic ice cap.

“Helping the ministry build a system of accountability was the biggest accomplishment we were able to help them complete,” said Hoch. “Part of building that system of accountability was moving to a computerized tracking system. Before, these items were tracked on paper. This wasn’t simply an issue with the Iraqi Army or Iraqi Police.”

Hoch’s unit was tasked not only with developing a system to track future deliveries of weapons, ammunition, uniforms and more, but also with trying to track down what had already been distributed. Hoch said they did their best to assure the ones who had been armed that they wouldn’t have to give up their weapons, because in a country such as Iraq, bearing arms is not only a right but a part of their culture. As he learned more about the culture, he was intrigued how work was built around friendships.

“The insurgents targeted the prison while I was there because they were planning a raid to get their people out,” said Hoch.

Story by MCC Dean Lohmeyer, Commander Submarine Force, Norfolk.
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APRIL 22, 2009